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restaurant*guide*

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p. 9



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ON THE COVER



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LOCALLY OWNED (AND OBSESSED OVER)

If television cooking shows are to be believed, the way to make the best burger is to take a patty and pile all kinds of crazy stuff on top of it. Fortunately for Twin Cities burger lovers, the folks at My Burger don't seem to watch a lot of TV.

My Burger's founders have pursued the perfection of the classic, straight-forward burger with a zeal normally reserved for cults, hockey fans, and science-fiction convention attendees. But we are all the lucky beneficiaries of their quixotic quest.

BACK TO BASICS

If you've never been to a My Burger (and if that's the case, may we be the first to welcome you home from what we can only assume is a lengthy period of captivity and/or space travel) when you walk in you'll be struck by the simplicity of it. The clean lines, the organized layout, and the colorful, whimsical, but unobtrusive decor, create a comfortable atmosphere that is well-matched to the restaurant's namesake food item.

Two signature offerings anchor the menu—the Original, topped with ketchup, mustard, pickles and grilled onions, and the California featuring lettuce, tomato, and mayo. In its own way, each pares the burger down to its basic components and together they are enough satisfy the world's two kinds of people: are you rich/savory or are you fresh/crisp?

To be fair, there are a number of burgers on the menu that feature fancy toppings – sautéed mushrooms, blue cheese, jalapeños, aiolis, that sort of thing – and you're permitted to craft your own burger from a generous list of free toppings. They also offer chicken, fish, salads for some reason, and an honest to goodness award-winning turkey burger (that's not a joke, they won a national contest). But burger purists will find themselves perfectly content with the first few items on offer and will leave the rest of the menu for the wannabes.

FLIPPIN' GOOD BURGERS

The primary reason My Burger's burgers tend to be a cut above their competition is because they've spent a lot of time perfecting the burger patty. As any chef will tell you, quality, well-seasoned, properly-cooked beef is what elevates a burger from ordinary to extraordinary.

To the delight of keto fans everywhere, My Burger's patty is the kind of burger that tastes good on its own thanks to a creative blend of sirloin and chuck beef cuts, a high-temp flattop grill that consistently delivers the all-important sear, and a proprietary mix of seasonings that they frustratingly refused to reveal.

WOULD YOU LIKE FRIES WITH THAT?

There's an old joke about college that the engineering major asks "how does it work?", the business major asks "how much does it cost?" and the philosophy major asks "would you like fries with that?" Well, not to pile onto the philosopher's woeful employment prospects, but their skills would be wasted at My Burger.

Every burger order at My Burger comes with fries. The menu allows for a free swap to coleslaw or an upgrade to sweet potato fries or onion rings, but they all seem unnecessary. Everyone—your dietitian, your mother, the nagging voice in your head—everyone tells you you're not *supposed* to get fries, but My Burger says "ignore all that, just take the fries." You breathe deep and whisper back: "Thank you, My Burger."

Locally-owned and family-run, the My Burger mini-chain (currently 6 locations) is getting less mini with another new location opening in the spring of 2019. At their current rate of expansion, they will be satisfying burger cravings throughout the Twin Cities in a few years. Then we'll have one more thing to brag about that Minnesotans do best.

MUST-TRY FOOD

THE ORIGINAL

ketchup, mustard, fried onions
 sweet pickles, fries included

DOUBLE CALI w/ CHEESE

lettuce, tomato, mayo,
 american cheese, fries included
(pictured, top right)

INSIDER TIPS

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5 things to know about Demi (since you won't be able to get a reservation for months)

Well, the Instagram influencers of Minneapolis-St. Paul already snatched up essentially the entire first two months worth of reservations at Gavin Kaysen's latest: Demi.

But that gives you some time to hunt between the couch cushions and save your pennies before for when seating at the new North Loop 20-seater becomes available.

Wondering what a ticket gets you? We stopped by to preview the Barrington menu (\$95) with Demi pairing (\$55). Here's what to know before you go.

1. There's a real church-based moment.

It arrives about halfway through dinner: the little gelatin orb surrounded by apple slices that'll have you all like, "Is this a fruit salad?" And then the chefs will be like, "So this is our take on a fruit salad."

2. But, you know. That's just the one moment.

Aunt Kathy never did think to make the Jello in her potluck classic with clarified cider, or to serve it with foie gras and fromage blanc. Nor did she quite master the rhubarb-ginger-radish jus Demi's king salmon is served swimming in, or the zingy pop of the deep green nettle mustard accompanying a tender cube of wagyu striploin. The coconut, birch syrup, and mint in the soy milk pudding could count as a holy trinity? Otherwise, Our Saviour's Lutheran it ain't.

3. This is a family affair.

Yes, every restaurant says that. Here it's true! Kaysen's wife, Linda, designed the restaurant with Shea Design; his brother, a woodworker, made everything from the steak knives to the shelving to the

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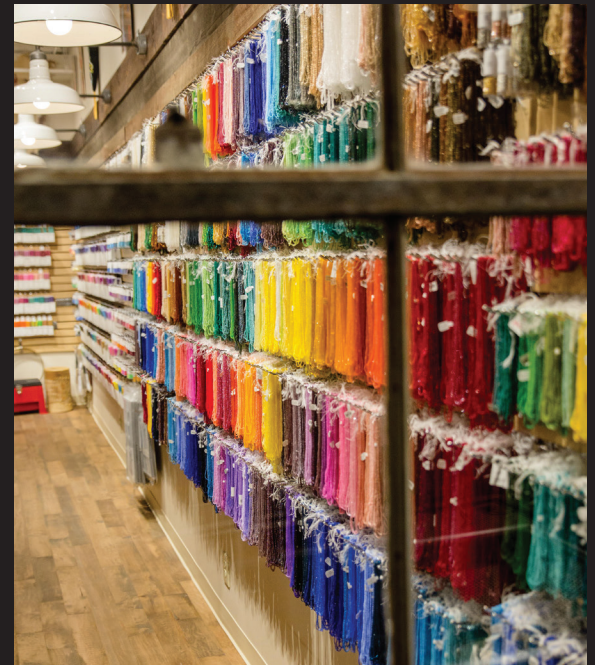
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one-of-a-kind silverware rests. Chef de cuisine Adam Ritter's wife is the GM at sister restaurant Bellecour. Even a cider served with one course comes from Minnesota's Sweetland Orchard, which is run by a husband-wife duo—and they only employ their family members.

There's also no division between front and back of house—like Travail and just/us, everyone here is trained in cheffing and service.

4. *Those dinner rolls, tho.*

Diane Moua is a powerful pastry witch, and I would like every meal everywhere to include the buttery perfection that is her brioche rolls. (At Demi, they arrive alongside the aforementioned fruit salad.)

5. *"We're going to keep feeding you until you tap out."*

That's what we were told as a tray of a half-dozen bite-sized desserts—chocolate-dipped brown sugar meringue, white chocolate truffles with pistachio and rose, sesame balls—appeared after our first few courses of sweets. And this was before a pint-sized pot of molten, fresh-from-the-griddle Rice Krispie Treats appeared.

Maybe you've felt the tasting menu trepidation: Will I need to stop for pizza after all these perfectly composed but very tiny plates? Not here, ya won't. Petit fours? More like petit—we'll-take-twelve, please.

DEMI - 212 N. Second St., Minneapolis,
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—EMILY CASSEL

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in the window. A sign for beloved vegetarian-friendly restaurant Evergreen still hangs on the building: a good landmark, in the meantime, for locating it.

And oh, dear reader, you'll want to locate it.

As a skeleton crew of three, partners Paige Alexander, Brian Hoffman, and Sophia Munch are newcomers to the restaurant scene. They're warm, affable, and, much like their food, unpretentious. Together, they're proving you don't need too many people—or ingredients—to make comforting flatbread sandwiches worth seeking out.

Their space is small, mostly occupied by the kitchen, but the walls are lined with counters for standing and eating, with hooks smartly installed just below for jackets and bags. (At my height—a towering five feet—I was initially concerned, but it turned out to be the perfect setup for shoveling sandwiches into my mouth like a pig at a trough. Anyone taller will be just fine.) There's more neon inside, and a rack of books and long-out-of-date issues of Time and MAD magazine add a pinch of whimsy.

Upon entering, you're greeted warmly and presented with suggestions and daily specials. There are five options (plus a special) for now, a short menu that shines with house-made everything, except for the meat.

Food is assembled and grilled fresh—small pucks of soft dough are rolled before your eyes—and everything features their thick, creamy, made-daily ricotta. Each sammy is finished on the flattop, expertly grilled and folded before it's cut into two triangles and wrapped in brown paper.

Fragrant and fresh off the grill, the flatbread itself has a lightly salted buttery-ness to it, with a flavor and texture somewhere between a thinner naan and a Mexican abuelita's

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hand-rolled flour tortilla. Exquisite. Do yourself a favor and rip off a hot piece of that tender bread to sample as soon as it's handed to you, then enjoy the entirety of the flavors combined.

The Number Two (\$5) features fresh, piney rosemary and comes drizzled with the perfect amount of sweet, mellow honey. At Hoffman's suggestion, I added prosciutto (\$3 extra, absolutely worth it), which provided a salty element that played very nicely with the fresh, velvety ricotta. The Number Five (\$9) includes the prosciutto, refreshing tomato, peppery arugula, and nut-free pesto. I managed to take a few bites before I was told the whole establishment is nut-free—and I couldn't tell, nor did I miss the nuts in the pesto.

On a recent special, mixed greens, fresh tomato, and crispy bacon keep it familiar, but the BLT (\$9) is worth getting for its tomato jam alone. With fat chunks of caramelized onion, bits of garlic, and the lingering kiss of warming ginger throughout, this ain't your mama's BLT. I added house-made "medium" heat pickled fresno peppers (\$1), which provided a zip of heat and a touch of sweetness to round out the updated classic.

Service here is relatively speedy, making for a lovely lunch, quick dinner, or anytime snack. (And don't forget to wash down your meal with a Feral Beverage Co. kombucha; it's made in the same building.)

Though the flatbreads travel short distances well, we recommend eating them fresh. Come summertime, there will be a small patio where you can enjoy your food outside while taking in the energy of Eat Street.

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—NATALIA MENDEZ



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You have two new BBQ places to check out in Northeast

If you're reading this, you made it out of the crushingly cold nightmare that was the polar vortex. Time to refuel and recover in the traditional way: with heaping platters of meat.

In northeast Minneapolis, you have two new places to try—one of which opened during the vortex—so get out there, ask your neighbor nicely to recharge your car battery if you have to, and replenish those energy stores.

BEAST BARBECUE

If there's a more lovely combination of words to read when it's 22-below out than "Come and get it, we are open and ready to give you the meat sweats!!" we haven't heard it.

The owners of Eli's Food & Cocktails announced nearly 11 months ago that they'd be moving into the old Legends Bar & Grill building on Hennepin Avenue—though then, their new place was going to be called Lipstick Pig.

"We're gonna keep the same Northeast bar vibe—meat raffle, pull-tabs," chef/co-owner Jeff Weber told us then.

The (wisely, we'd say) renamed meat heaven officially opened in late January. The menu includes a Double Double Bacon Pork Butt Burger, "Pork Candy," and absolutely massive smoked wings. There's also a beer brewed with HeadFlyer Brewing—Dogtown Beast Lager—and a bourbon collab with RockFilter distillery.

In a November press release, the Beast team promised meaty offerings of pork ribs, chicken, beef, and whitefish, all "conscientiously sourced and smoked over oak, pecan, and apple woods with the slow, low traditions of classic barbecue cooking." Smoked meats are served by the half-pound,

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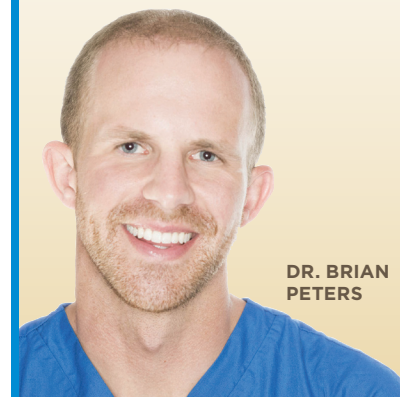
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Lutsen MN Maple Syrup 12

Quiche

Chef's daily selection served with Mixed Greens 13

Omelette

Chef's daily selection served with Mixed Greens 13

Nics Benedict

Poached Eggs with Hollandaise Sauce and
Choice of House-Smoked Salmon or
Ham and Leeks, Hash Browns 14

Steak and Eggs

Creekstone Farms Terrus Major, Creamy Horseradish,
2 eggs any style, Hash Browns, Toast 16

Breakfast Flatbread

Ask your server about today's fresh selection 13

SOUPS & SALADS

Soup du Jour

Ask your server about today's fresh selection
Bowl 9 | Cup 6

Heirloom Tomato Salad

Cucumbers, Olives, Feta Cheese. Extra Virgin Olive Oil,
Red Wine Vinegar 12

Salmon Salad

Norwegian Organic Salmon, Maple Glaze, Orange,
Cranberry, Pecan, Champagne Vinaigrette 17

Chopped Chicken Cobb

Soft Cooked Egg, Bacon, Blue Cheese, Red Onion,
Tomato, Avocado 15

Executive Chef Dain McMillin, Sous Chef Jessica Mruz

SANDWICHES

Served with choice of Fries, Vegetables or Mixed Greens

Sub Sweet Potato Fries for \$1.50

Sub a Cup of Soup for \$2.50

Almond Crusted Walleye Sandwich

Brioche, Remoulade, Coleslaw 17

Grilled Chicken Avocado BLT

Multigrain, Grilled Chicken Breast, Avocado, Bacon,
Lettuce, Tomato Cholula Aioli 16

Nic's Burger

½ lb. House Ground Filet Mignon, Bacon, Cheddar,
Gruyere, Greens, Smoked Tomato Jam, Dijon 17

Almond Crusted Walleye

MN Wild Rice, Lemon Hericort Verts, Remoulade 17

INN FAVORITES

Steak Frites

Creekstone Farms Terrus Major, Blu Cheese,
Balsamic, Fries 16

Seafood Rissotto

Fish, Shrimp, Mussels, Crab, Asparagus,
Tomatoes, Grana Padano 17

Lobster Wrap

Lobster Salad, Bacon, Avocado 18

BEVERAGES

Coffee, Tea 3

Mimosa 7

Espresso 5

Bloody Mary 9

Coke Products 3

Sparkling Wine 7

Ask Your Server about our Wine List

SIDES

Warm Sticky Pecan Roll 4

One Egg 4

Toast with Jam 3

Bacon or Maple Sausage 4

Hash Browns 3

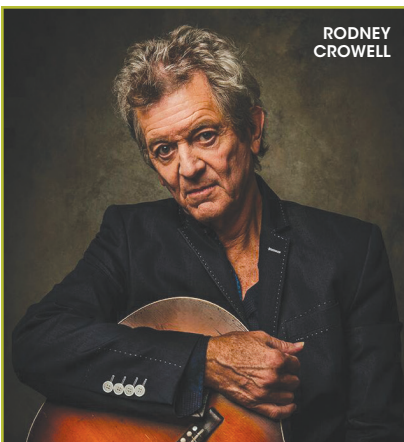
Sunrise Porridge 10

Granola & Yogurt 8

Spring, 2019

Larry & Caryl Abdo have been the Innkeepers of the Nicollet Island Inn since 2005. Their greatest joy as owners of the Inn is the number of guests who return year after year to celebrate anniversaries, birthdays and special occasions of all kinds in the same space where their memories were first created. Whether you are here for the first time or to celebrate a flickering memory, Larry & Caryl welcome you to the Nicollet Island Inn!





RODNEY CROWELL

RODNEY CROWELL

Saturday, March 23

Social Hour 7pm
Concert 8pm

JOSHUA REDMAN QUARTET

Saturday, April 13

Social Hour 7pm
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with the standard sides, and there's also a takeout counter.

The same release said you won't recognize Beast as the former home of Legends; it's been stripped to bones and tricked out with oxidized metal panels, a "hot smoky inspired" concrete floor, and industrial lighting.

But don't worry: The meat raffle and pull-tabs are still part of the plan, as are weekly bingo nights and live music in the basement on weekends.

825 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis;
612-331-4575, beastbarbecue.com

MARKET BAR-B-QUE

Market Bar-B-Que has had to move a few times—when you've been around since 1946, that's bound to happen. So when the Polski family heard their Nicollet Avenue landlord would be giving them the boot for redevelopment last May, they packed it up once more. Except this time, they're trying out a new neighborhood.

Market Bar-B-Que basically recreated the original experience in a different part of town, according to the Strib. They stripped the old place down and moved much of the interior to the new spot, giving it a vibe that feels downright timeless for a restaurant that opened in mid-January.

The massive menu has more than a dozen sandwiches—including "the biggest wiener in town"—plus trays, combo platters, and seafood. There are a few salads, and an Impossible burger makes an appearance for the vegetarians in your party. Signature sides include the standards like baked beans, collard greens, and hush puppies, along with Dorito-dusted pork rinds.

This is a Market that can satisfy your midnight meat cravings, too: The spot's open 11 a.m. through 2 a.m., seven days a week.

220 NE Lowry Ave., Minneapolis,
612-872-1111, marketbbq.com

—EMILY CASSEL



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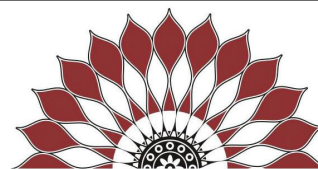
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Nine restaurants to try if you're already sick of your resolution to eat healthy

You started 2019 with the best of intentions. This would be the year, you resolved, that you'd get enough sleep, go to the gym consistently, and eat vegetables other than French fries.

Now that we've hit March, you've lost some steam—this whole healthy living thing is tougher than it looks on Instagram. Unfortunately, we can't help you get eight hours of sleep or hit the treadmill. But we can give you some healthy restaurant options that'll keep you on track with your food goals for the New Year.

Local favorites for healthy fare

FIG + FARRO

Uptown's formerly vegetarian restaurant recently transitioned to a completely plant-based menu while maintaining its focus on globally inspired comfort food. Veggie-centric entrees include kimchi hot pot and barbecued beets served with grits and braised greens.

3001 Hennepin Ave. S., Minneapolis;
612-208-0609, figandfarro.com

WHOLE SUM KITCHEN

This food-truck-turned-cafe offers nutritious options all day long, with plenty for vegetarians and vegans. At breakfast, choose from overnight oats, chia parfaits, and acai or smoothie bowls. The lunch and dinner menu features salads, wraps, and quinoa or brown rice bowls. Nourishing beverage options include fresh-pressed juices, smoothies, and wellness shots.

824 W. 50th St., Minneapolis;
612-545-5687, wholesumkitchen.com

SPROUT SALAD

Sure, a salad is the default good-for-you option, but there's no need to settle for limp greens and lackluster dressing. Sprout's three Minneapolis and St. Paul locations offer a lineup of salads with fresh, sustainable




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ingredients like wild salmon and organic quinoa, plus house-made dressings. There's even an "umami" section of the menu, with satisfying picks like the K-Town, with grilled steak, kimchi, and a spicy gochujang vinaigrette.

Multiple locations, sproutsalad.com

AGRA CULTURE

The Minneapolis mini-chain has a slew of clearly labeled vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free, gluten-free, and paleo selections, ranging from breakfast burritos and quinoa porridge to flatbreads and tacos. As the restaurant's name implies, vegetables are woven throughout the menu, and the cilantro brown rice is a tasty way to get in some whole grains.

Multiple locations, agra-culture.com

BIRCHWOOD CAFE

Thanks to a locally sourced menu that changes eight times per year, there's always something new to try at Birchwood, whether you're vegetarian, vegan, or all about the sustainably sourced meat. The brunch menu also stands out for its wholesome options, like a tofu hash, vegetable scramble, and turkey sausage.

311 E. 25th St., Minneapolis;
612-722-4474, birchwoodcafe.com

Chain restaurants with new healthy menu options

GIORDANO'S

A chain specializing in cheese-laden deep dish pizza? Probably not the first thing that springs to mind when looking for wholesome options. But at Giordano's, there's a new "Lighter Fare Menu" with lower-calorie items. The Mediterranean kale and grilled buffalo chicken salads clock in at just under 500 calories each, and the skinny chicken arrabiata flatbread is topped with fresh arugula and baby heirloom tomatoes.

giordanos.com

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Readers' Choice Poll

Each year, our annual Best of the Twin Cities issue celebrates all the things we love most about our metropolis, from the finest bars and restaurants, to the coolest people, parks, museums, and music.

From March 5 until midnight on March 26, you'll be able to vote on the top five nominees in each category.

Then be sure to catch the Readers' Choice Poll results in our annual Best of the Twin Cities issue, online and hitting newsstands April 17.

citypages.com/vote

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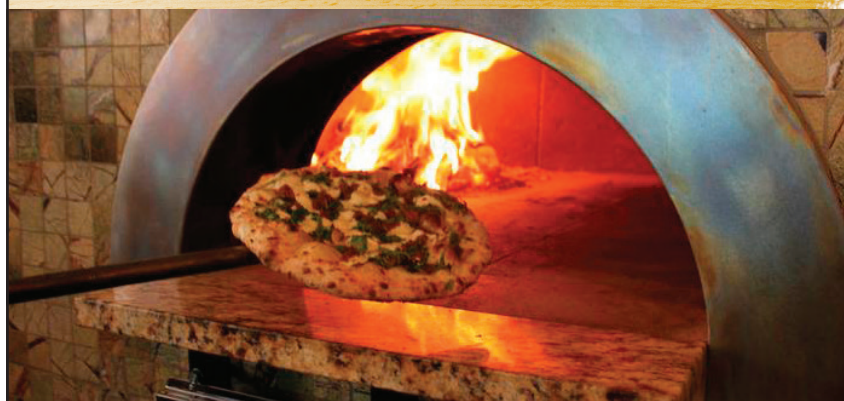
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pizzas can be ordered with a cauliflower crust. And vitamin-rich toppings include fresh tomato with basil, pepperoni, or wild mushroom and goat cheese.

wildfirerestaurant.com

CHIPOTLE

Wondering whether your meal meets the guidelines of your new diet? The iconic fast-casual chain is making it easy with a lineup of new “lifestyle bowls” tailored to the latest trends. The paleo and Whole30 salad bowls feature meat, vegetables, and salsa, while the keto salad bowl includes cheese. (We’re not exactly sure which nutrition plan the double protein bowl fits into... but far be it from us to turn down rice, beans, and a full portion each of steak and chicken.) The new bowls are available through Chipotle’s mobile app or website for in-restaurant pickup or delivery.

chipotle.com

CARIBOU COFFEE

The Minnesota-based coffee chain has made it easier to resist the siren song of the pastry case: Their new souffles are made with cage-free eggs (bacon and gouda or spinach and mushroom). There are also some new menu items for those with dietary restrictions, including dairy-free coconut milk lattes and gluten-free breakfast sandwiches.

cariboucoffee.com

—STACY BROOKS

Here are the Twin Cities' 2019 James Beard Award semi-finalists

Maybe you’re still mad about the movie Oscars. Let’s talk about the “Oscars of Food” instead!

On February 27, the James Beard Award Foundation announced the 2019 list of Restaurant and Chef Award semifinalist nominees, and there are a whole bunch of Minneapolis-St. Paul names on it. Here’s the



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2019 list of Twin Cities folks in full:

Best New Restaurant

Popol Vuh, Minneapolis

Outstanding Restaurant

Restaurant Alma, Minneapolis

Outstanding Wine Program

The Bachelor Farmer, Minneapolis

Outstanding Pastry Chef

DIANE MOUA
Spoon and Stable, Minneapolis

Outstanding Restaurateur

BRENDA LANGTON
& TIMOTHY KANE
Spoonriver, Minneapolis

Rising Star Chef of the Year

RIKKI GIAMBRUNO
Hyacinth, St. Paul

Best Chef: Midwest

THOMAS BOEMER
In Bloom, Minneapolis

STEVEN BROWN
Tilia, Minneapolis

DANIEL DEL PRADO
Martina, Minneapolis

ANN KIM
Young Joni, Minneapolis

CHRISTINA NGUYEN
Hai Hai, Minneapolis

KARYN TOMLINSON
Corner Table, Minneapolis

JAMIE MALONE
Grand Cafe, Minneapolis

You can find all of 2019's semifinalists from around the country online; finalists will be announced on March 27.

There's a lot of overlap with last year's list of local JBA semifinalists, which included Grand Cafe (Best New Restaurant) and 112 Eatery (Outstanding Service), along with Salty Tart's Michelle Gayer for Outstanding Baker, Alex Roberts at Restaurant Alma for Outstanding Chef, and Diane Moua (then Yang) at Spoon and Stable for Outstanding Pastry Chef.

The 2018 Best Chef: Midwest semifinalist round also included Thomas Boemer, Corner Table; Steven Brown, Tilia; Gavin Kaysen, Spoon and Stable; Ann Kim, Young Joni; Jamie Malone, Grand Cafe; and Christina Nguyen, Hai Hai.



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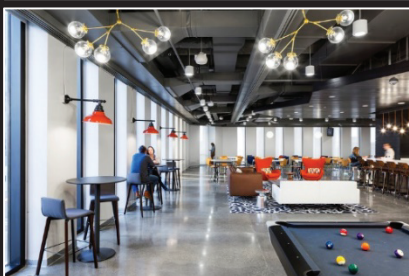
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BEST LUNCH
—City Pages Best of the Twin Cities 2017



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But only one local chef—Gavin Kay-sen—took home an award in 2018. (Sean Sherman and Beth Dooley won in the awards' media section for their co-authored cookbook: *The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen*.)

We'll also add that there are a lot of CP favorites on here! Read our recent reviews of relative newbies like Hyacinth, Popol Vuh, Martina, and Hai Hai, or dig through our full list of restaurant reviews, at citypages.com.

—EMILY CASSEL

These were your favorite Bite Squad restaurants of 2018

To a high school student, statistics are the worst, a distraction from all the drinking and lusting and general dicking off you'd rather be doing.

For an employed adult, though? Now, when you're ass-deep in spreadsheets, those same statistics are the dicking-off activity.

Take the ones below, which should distract you from the TPS report you're supposed to be filing for the next five minutes at least. Provided by Twin Cities-based food delivery service Bite Squad, they outline the 10 most popular dishes and the five most popular restaurants folks ordered last year. And they actually paint a pretty cool picture about our too-lazy-for-takeout ordering habits.

In the rest of the U.S., Bite Squad data shows that the five most-ordered munchies were wings, burgers, pizza, burritos, and fried rice.

Not so in Minneapolis and St. Paul, where just one burger—the Ultimate Burger at Red Cow—even cracked the top 10. Here, we were much more likely to go for Revival's Cheddar Drop Biscuits or Mac and Cheese (No. 8 and 3, respectively) or get Pimento Jamaican Kitchen's One Love Special or Kingston Style Jerk Chicken (No. 9 and 7).





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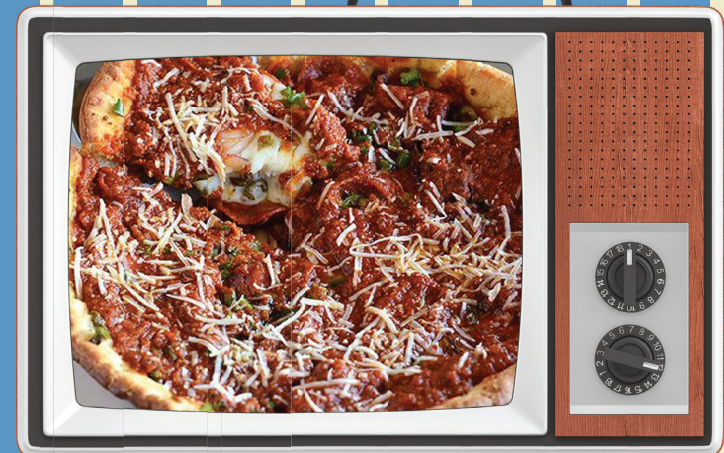
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But the most-ordered-from restaurant in town was Coconut Thai, where three dishes—Fresh Thai Spring Rolls, Fried Cream Cheese Wontons, and Pad Thai, which took home the No. 1 spot—were all among the top 10.

Here are the most-delivered foods of the year in Minneapolis-St. Paul, according to Bite Squad's crack data compilation team:

10. *Ultimate Burger from Red Cow*
9. *One Love Special from Pimento Jamaican Kitchen*
8. *Cheddar Drop Biscuits from Revival*
7. *Kingston Style Jerk Chicken from Pimento Jamaican Kitchen*
6. *Fried Cream Cheese Wontons from Coconut Thai*
5. *Sweet Corn-Cornbread from Brasa Rotisserie*
4. *Fresh Thai Spring Rolls from Coconut Thai*
3. *Mac & Cheese from Revival*
2. *Naan from Darbar India Grill (for the second year in a row)*
1. *Pad Thai from Coconut Thai (for the second year in a row)*

And your five favorite restaurants were:

5. *Revival*
4. *French Meadow Bakery & Cafe*
3. *Darbar India Grill*
2. *Red Cow*
1. *Coconut Thai*

"Minneapolis folks ate a lot more collard greens (6,739 percent more) and banana cream pie (1,869 percent) in 2018 than the year prior (thanks to the arrival of Revival!), and also significantly more Tennessee Hot Chicken Sandwiches from Red Cow," Bite Squad reports.

You can find all the Twin Cities data here (filed under "Minneapolis" alone, though a Bite Squad rep promises us they took St. Paul orders into account as well).

The company's nationwide Year In Review numbers are available online, and if you want to look into how people ordered in Honolulu or Memphis or... I don't know, Little Rock? You can do that too.

—EMILY CASSEL

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St. Paul's Keg & Case voted America's best new food hall

Food halls! We called these gussied-up food courts the top dining trend of 2018, and we're not the only ones who think so.

"Food halls are one of the biggest trends on the culinary landscape, with an estimated 180 across the U.S.," USA Today recently wrote. That sentence opened their new list of the finest food halls in the country—on which one of our own, the food-and-drink wonderland that is St. Paul's Keg & Case, took home the No. 1 spot.

The 33,000-square-foot hall topped a reader-voted list of 20 nominees selected by USA Today, followed by Legacy Food Hall in Plano, Texas, and Raleigh, North Carolina's Morgan Street Food Hall & Market.

"Situated on the grounds of the historic Schmidt Brewery, this new St. Paul food hall combines chef-driven restaurants with craft beer and a curated market of regional products," USA Today writes. "There are more than two dozen vendors on site, serving everything from coffee and sweets to smoked meats, Jamaican chicken, pizza and barbecue."

Not bad for a place that only opened last September. And somehow they... don't even get into the massive tower of fungi?

Check out USA Today's full list of the top 10 food halls in the country below.

1. *Keg and Case West 7th Market: St. Paul, MN*
2. *Legacy Food Hall: Plano, TX*
3. *Morgan Street Food Hall & Market: Raleigh, NC*
4. *Finn Hall: Houston, TX*
5. *La Centrale: Miami, FL*
6. *Riverside Food Lab: Riverside, CA*
7. *Little Italy Food Hall: San Diego, CA*
8. *Auction House Market: New Orleans, LA*
9. *Revolutsia: Wichita, KS*
10. *Pythian Market: New Orleans, LA*

—EMILY CASSEL




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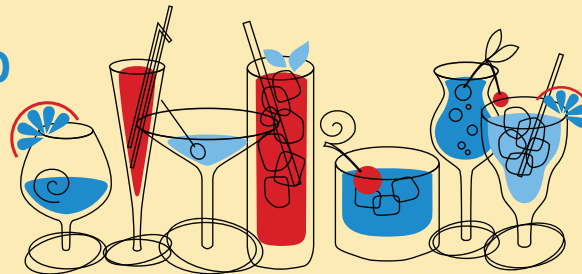


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Spinning Wylde, Fresh spun and dye free cotton candy clouds made with organic cane sugar and natural flavors. Spinning out smiles in over 50 flavors with fun toppings, and a touch of whimsy!



Pimento Jamaican Kitchen, Winners of "Food Court Wars" on Food Network, Pimento Jamaican Kitchen offers authentic Jamaican street and comfort food using family recipes and fresh ingredients since 2012. Don't worry, Eat happy!

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Evla Pottery, For one-of-a kind functional pottery and abstract oil paintings from a husband-and-wife team of longtime local artists.



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MN Slice, Where all the things we adore about MN come together to make a slice shop. The crust is a chewy sourdough, a great transportation device for a variety of hearty and flavorful toppings!



Clutch Brewing Co., Shifting the craft beer industry into the next gear with hand-crafted ales and lagers. Enjoy sessionable libations and beers with unique, locally sourced ingredients in a welcoming taproom and lounge overlooking the market.



Gazta and Enhancements, A cheese bar focusing on pairing cheese plates with craft cocktails, wine and anything else you drink. Serving Basque-focused dishes, and offering a great selection at our cheese retail counter.



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